ER Site No. 49: Building 9820 Drains

ADS: 1295
Operable Unit: Septic Tanks and Drainfields

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Site History

ER Site 49 includes the area immediately surrounding the outfall from Building 9820 and the former location of a trailer used as a darkroom for photo processing. Building 9820, located in Coyote Canyon about 3.6 km (1.5 mi) from the Sol se Mete Aerial Cable Site, was constructed in 1958 for explosive compounds synthesis. The facility also was used for some animal experiments in 1958 and 1959, but little is known about these activities. A machine shop was opened in the mid-1960s and may have discharged organic compounds to the floor drains. Washing of nickel-cadmium batteries with dilute acetic acid in the past may have discharged up to 4 L (1 gal.) of the acid into the drains or sinks. Some photoprocessing was performed in the past. There is currently no activity in the building. The site is adjacent to an Air Force training range. Spent cartridges and debris from flares, smoke bombs, and other devices used in training are often found at the site.

Building 9820 has no toilet facilities. There are five floor drains in the building and one hand sink located in a former woodworking shop. The sink discharges into a 4-in. asbestos-cement drain line, which drains east from the building to a surface outfall near the bottom of a small arroyo. This arroyo is a tributary of Coyote Canyon. The floor drains, which are now sealed, discharged through the same line. The drain system is no longer in use. The discharge point is vegetated with a type of cane often used in landscaping that dies back in cold weather or during dry periods and shows regrowth with rain. A thick mat of dead vegetation has built up around the discharge point.

Non-potable water was trucked in periodically to fill a 3800-L (1000-gal.) storage tank at the facility. No estimates of the volume of water used exist. The site is between 15 - 45 meters (50 - 150 feet) above the regional water table, although no depth-to-groundwater data is available for the area in which this site is located.

Constituents of Concern

Constituents of concern include explosives residue, organic compounds [methanol, trichloroethylene (TCE), toluene, BTEX], residues from photoprocessing chemicals (cadmium, hexavalent chromium, cyanide, and silver), and barium.

Current Hazards

No known surface or subsurface hazards have been identified, based on environmental soil and soil-gas sampling that has been conducted at the site.

Current Status of Work

A surface radiation survey did not detect any anomalies above background at the site. Screening performed by SNL/NM Radiation Protection Operations near the outfall did not detect any anomalies.

Soil sampling was conducted in the fall of 1994 and in 1995.

A confirmatory sampling No Further Action (NFA) proposal for this site was submitted to New Mexico Environment Department/Hazardous Radioactive Materials Bureau (NMED/HRMB) in June 1996. NMED issued a Request for Supplemental Information (RSI) in June 1998. SNL/NM responded to the RSI in November 1998. NMED issued another RSI in June 2000 and has required that a monitoring well be installed at this site.

In August 2001 a groundwater monitoring well (well CYN-MW5) was installed approximately one-half mile north of and downstream of the site, at the confluence of the minor tributary in which ER Site 49 is located, and Lurance Canyon.

Future Work Planned

Groundwater samples will be collected from well CYN-MW5 for four quarters, or one year. These samples will be analyzed for volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds (VOCs and SVOCs), high explosive (HE) compounds, metals, hexavalent chromium, and gross alpha and gross beta. The analyical results for these samples will be reviewed by NMED and SNL/NM personnel and the site will either be approved for NFA, or additional characterization work will be completed.

Waste Volume Estimated/Generated

Two drums of non-regulated asbestos pipe were generated.

Information for ER Site 49 was last updated Dec 11, 2001.